

C.M. Reed Block
(Frank's Hotel)
22-26 East Fifth Street
Erie
Erie County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1957

HABS
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13.

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE Pennsylvania	COUNTY Erie	TOWN OR VICINITY Erie
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) C.M. Reed Block (<u>Erie Gazette</u> , 16 August, 1860)		HABS NO. PA-1957
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Franks Hotel		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 22-24-26 East 5th St., 428-430-432 French St.		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1860 (Tax records)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) John Hill (<u>Erie Gazette</u> , 16 August, 1860)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Built by Erie's leading businessman of the time, and designed by a self-taught but accomplished architect. Erected as a commercial structure.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Commercial Italianate		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Masonry		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Building is essentially rectangular, measuring 120 feet along the front and 60 feet in depth.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE A large but low-rise commercial design, with a highly patterned but judiciously detailed facade.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Adaptation as hotel in 1940 pretty much obliterated original interior layout. Second floor sky-light still remains.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Pilasters removed from first story. Door and window placement changed. Alterations were probably ca. 1930.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Condition generally poor. Rear wall separated from structural members.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE Declared eligible for National Register.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDE LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Tax records, City Directories, County Histories, newspaper accounts, site surveys.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION John R. Claridge, Erie County Historical Society		DATE 10/5/82 14 OCT 1982

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Original and subsequent owners: references to the chain of title to the land upon which the structure stands, are in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Erie County Courthouse, Erie, Pa.
- 1837 Deed, November 1, 1837, recorded in Volume K, page 321. Judah Colt, Thoas Colt et al to Rufus S. Reed. Lot #2589. \$3,000. Lot #2592 was acquired prior to 1823, for which years all records were destroyed by fire.
- 1847 Will, March 31, 1847, recorded in Volume B, page 183. Entire R.S. Reed estate to Nancy Reed (wife).
- 1864 Will, September 20, 1864, recorded in Volume C, page 692. "I give, devise, and bequeath to my son Charles M. Reed, all my personal and real estate not heretofore devised or bequeathed." North half of Lot #2592 bequeathed to Anna C.G. Clay.
- 1940 Deed, December 26, 1940, recorded in Volume 406, page 70. Charles M. Reed estate to John Kenyon. From northwest corner of French and 5th, 120 3/4 feet west x 61 1/2 feet north x 120 3/4 feet east x 61 1/2 feet south. Having erected thereon two-story brick building. \$7,500.
- 1955 Deed, September 15, 1955, recorded in Volume 711, page 402. John Kenyon to Max Silver and Morris Radov. As above. \$41,070.
- 1968 Deed, May 13, 1968, recorded in Volume 981, page 183. Max Silver and Barney Radov to Frank and Mary Butchkoskey. As above. \$60,000.

2. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure

The building occupies an important site in Erie's early history. It was here that Rufus Seth Reed, son of the first family to settle in the area, built a combined store and home in 1804. Later the Gazette, Erie's first permanent newspaper was published on the ground floor of this frame structure from 1820 until 1836. Reed himself continued to use the north portion of the building as his residence before moving into a new mansion at the southeast corner of State and South Park Row in 1836.

On May 10, 1860 a fire destroyed all the wooden buildings from the middle of the north side of 5th Street between State and French, around the corner to the middle of the west side of French between 4th and 5th. In August of the same year the son Charles Manning Reed erected the present brick building on the site of the old. It was based on a design by the notable Erie architect John Hill, and was called "substantial and beautiful".

The major tenants of the building during the 19th century and first quarter of the 20th century, were two prominent grocers H.B. Claus and Charles B. Wuenschel. Claus opened a grocery and wholesale liquor store in 1863, and sold the business to Wuenschel in 1887. The Wuenschel firm remained at the location until 1927. During the latter years it traded exclusively in wholesale tobacco and cigars due to Prohibition.

The building was used as a hotel for the first time in 1940, its customers reflecting the declining fortunes of the neighborhood in which it is located.

The significance of the building derives from its association with a leading Erie family, a recognized local architect, and its long period of occupancy by two successful merchants of German extraction.